



Senator Feinstein: Report Highlights Need for New Legislation to Reform Electronic Voting

December 1, 2006

Washington, DC – U.S. Senator Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.), scheduled to become the new Chairman of the Senate Rules and Administration Committee for the 110th Congress, today issued the following statement regarding electronic voting reform:

“A draft report by the National Institute of Standards and Technology made public today reaffirms my belief that there are serious questions about the security and reliability of paperless electronic voting machines. It further demonstrates the importance of moving forward with new legislation to require that there be an independent paper record of every ballot.

I plan to introduce that legislation at the beginning of the new Congress and hold hearings soon after, with the intent of moving the bill to the Senate floor as soon as possible. As we’ve seen in Sarasota, Florida, where officials have been unable to account for about 18,000 undervotes in the Congressional election, it is crucial that there be an independent record that can be reviewed by election officials.

One-third of voters cast their ballots in the midterm election using new electronic voting machines, and problems arose, not only in Florida, but in various jurisdictions across the country. We must do everything we can to restore confidence in the outcomes of elections by helping to ensure that every vote cast by an American citizen is recorded accurately and that every eligible voter can, in fact, cast a ballot.”

Background:

The report by the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) is scheduled to be considered next week by the Technical Guidelines Development Committee. This Committee is charged with advising the Election Assistance Commission by providing recommendations on voluntary standards and guidelines related to voting equipment and technologies. A copy of the report is available at: <http://vote.nist.gov/DraftWhitePaperOnSlinVMSG2007-20061120.pdf>

A summary of the Ballot Integrity Act follows:

The Ballot Integrity Act

- **Paper Records, Voter Verification and Audit:** Requires that voting machines produce a paper record that voters can verify, and correct if necessary, after

casting their vote. Also requires that the paper record be preserved and used in a mandatory, random audit.

- **Electronic Voting System Security:** Takes measures to prevent technological manipulation of electronic voting systems and requires that all voting system software be disclosed to and certified by the Election Assistance Commission.
- **Campaign Activities by Election Officials:** Prohibits a chief state election official from serving on any political campaign committee of a candidate for Federal office, making any public comments in support of a candidate in an official capacity, or soliciting political contributions on behalf of any candidate for Federal office.
- **Official Election Observers:** Grants all official, legitimate domestic and international election observers unrestricted access to the election process, provided that they accept election rules, do not interfere with the election process, respect the secrecy of the ballot and are accredited by the Election Assistance Commission.
- **Military and Overseas Voting:** Makes it easier for overseas and military voters to send in absentee ballot requests, absentee ballots and voter registration forms by prohibiting states from refusing to accept ballots and registration forms due to non-essential requirements (such as size and stock of paper, and whether or not it is notarized).
- **Enforcement of HAVA Provisions:** Clarifies that individuals can pursue legal resolution of violations of the Help America Vote Act. Permanently extends the authorization of the Election Assistance Committee. Requires that contractors hired by the Commission go through a public bidding process.

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